Finding a job on campus
International student orientation 2015

Note
This handout is focused on talking about the strategies for on-campus job searching and tips on getting offers of employment. U.S. immigration regulations regarding one’s work status will not be discussed here.

Check the International Center’s web site to learn more about the definition, hours allowed to work, examples of on-campus employment, requirement, and documentation needed after getting a job.

The web site (hyperlinked on the slide) contains extensive info regarding F1/J1 employment. Should you get lost when trying to understand the legalities of your work-permit, do not hesitate to come to IC for a drop-in advising or to make an appointment with an adviser.

The work-study program provides jobs for students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay for education expenses. Under the work-study program, a percentage of a student’s earnings is paid through federal or state funds, and the student’s employer pays the remainder. Non-work study jobs are only covered by the employer.

However, some jobs that prefer work-study will hire non-work study students if the former applicants seem inadequate for the position. Additionally, make sure to read the job description carefully on the website as they usually mention that explicitly.
**Why do you want to get a job? -**

1. Get some work experience to beef up your resume.
2. Get recommendation letters and personal references for future employment or education.
3. Meet new people and make friends.
4. Learn U.S. work culture and develop valuable skills (e.g., communication time-management skills, etc.).
5. Apply for more challenging job after you first year of work (e.g. dining hall worker -> dining hall manager). Not only do you climb up the corporate ladder, but also get a raise too!

**What to look for when applying for a job -**

1. **Effort** - Some jobs like those at the desks in the libraries pay less but involve little real work, i.e. you could probably catch up on reading or do homework (if your supervisors allows it)
2. **Salary** - Appropriate to skill level & amount of effort involved. Do not expect a double-digit salary when you have no prior experience.
3. **Practicality** - Try to find job, which looks good on resume & provides learning experiences and valuable skills (e.g., Computer skill, job related to your major, etc.). Jobs unrelated to your major can still serve useful in the future e.g. a student majoring in biology working as a peer adviser at International center might help him/her to learn how to communicate better in a multicultural environment. You might realize you had a natural talent for something that you did not know until you did that particular job. Go and explore! (As long, it does not affect your studies).

**Remember** - Education first, Employment later.
Possible places to look for jobs (hyperlinked here and on the slides) -

1. **Residence Hall Housing Office** - Resident or non-resident, grad or undergrad – all are eligible to apply.
2. **Recreational Sports** – Some non-work study jobs are available
3. **University Library** and **Law Library** – Both offer a number of non-work-study jobs but University Library has a greater variety of jobs for different skillsets than the Law library. For example, the Asia library will usually look for students who knows one or more east-Asian languages to help them catalogue books or prepare a database.
4. **UM Transportation Service** - Become a blue bus driver if you feel courageous.
5. **Academic Success Program Tutor** – Help student athletes with their coursework.
6. **Science Learning Centre** (SLC) - Work either as a tutor or as a facilitator for the courses offered here.
7. **Information and Technology Services** (ITS) – Multiple options to work for in the IT department of umich.
8. **Office of New Student Programs** (ONSP) – Become a tour guide if you are proud wolverine and want to share your enthusiasm with other prospective students. You can also be a part of the orientation theatre group (UMETC) for incoming international and local students.
9. **Sweetland Centre for Writing** – If you are confident in your writing skill and want to help other students with their papers, then this is perfect for you. Keep in mind it has a strict deadline, so apply as soon as the application is released.

**So what do you do after getting an offer?**

Complete “student employment application” in wolverine access (under “student business”).

Human resources (HR) has information on student employment procedures and step-by-step application instructions

You may need to visit to student employment office at the basement of the student activities building (SAB) to submit additional documents for processing your I-9.
Grad-only jobs -

As the name suggests, a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) position has more to do with teaching and teaching-related work (such as grading, leading a discussion), whereas a Graduate Student Research Assistant (GSRA) position will focus more on helping with research projects. Here are some notes:

1. You may receive a GSI or GSRA award from either your department or another department on campus.

2. If you would like to become a GSI, be sure to ask the department when you should take the ITA test in order to be considered for a teaching assistantship.

3. A GSI teaching orientation is required and for most departments, an international student must take the graduate student instructor oral English test (GSI-OET) for prospective GSIs.

What makes me a good candidate?

The following are some credentials that employers might look for jobs on campus. There is no particular order to the items on the list, nor is it relevant to all jobs. That is, some might be more relevant to people seeking for GSI and GSRA positions while some other would apply more to other general jobs.

1. Excellent oral English

2. Familiarity with the teaching materials - A very good grasp of the college-level courses is a must.

3. Passion for teaching

4. Research interests - Talk with professors about what specific research projects they would like you to work on.

5. Skill sets - Focus on the projects that can have your old skills applied and new skills taught.

6. Funding - Funding from the research group is great, but sometimes funding from other sources would also be even more helpful.
Make sure you do the following –

Here is a list of tips, not comprehensive however, on how you could identify job openings and eventually secure one.

1. Ask about all possible positions other than GSI and GSRA, such as:
   a. Grader Positions, as a grader position might lead to a GSI one.
   b. Graduate Assistants
   c. These jobs are usually posted in [https://studentemployment.umich.edu/](https://studentemployment.umich.edu/)

2. NETWORK with people that could potentially lead to employment inside and outside of your home department, such as:
   a. graduate coordinator
   b. professors that you took classes with
   c. fellow grad students
   d. people working at places where you’d like to work
   e. The reason behind looking for jobs outside of your home department is that other departments might also want someone who has the same skills set as your home department. For example, if you are a biology graduate student and has experience with chemistry, your expertise might get you a GSI position in chemistry; if you are a physics student, you might be able teach some EE classes, and vice versa. So do not limit yourself to only one department.

3. Look out for Emails sent out by professors and research leaders!
   a. Keep your eyes and ears open! Some jobs are advertised to particular audience only (e.g., by e-mail).

4. Subscribe to the listserv of your school/college/department.
   a. Pay attention to special events advertisements (e.g. conferences) for job and networking opportunities.
   b. Jobs for graduate student staff assistants (GSSA postings) can be found at Rackham grad school web site [web site](#)

6. Consider volunteering, as the experience and the network that you build from the volunteering could not only help you get into the system, but could potentially help you know and get a paid position as well.

**Treat any job seriously!** – As an international student, the kind of impression you leave at the workplace not only affects you, but also those who are coming from your country to study here in the future.